

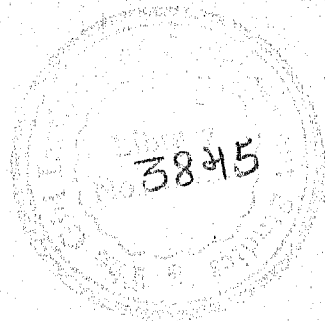
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AGRARIAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE, RURAL POWER AND DYNAMICS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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**GIRI INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
LUCKNOW**

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G.P. Mishra

Much has been said and discussed about the distribution of gains from rural development programmes and measures. It is claimed that the process is inequitable in character. The inequalitarian structure of ownership of assets and skills is considered responsible for this phenomenon. The 'target groups' approach to planning for rural development¹ which was considered as a suitable alternative to the aggregative approach, and was applied somewhat extensively lately, has also not yielded the desired results. The reason is that even in the 'target group' approach, most programmes require possession of some income-generating assets by target groups as a necessary condition for deriving benefits from them directly; and those who do not possess any such assets are assured of such provisions for improving their socio-economic conditions. In either case, the approach is based on the asset-holding hypothesis of development. Moreover, the approach is also supplemented with the household theory of planning for rural development so far as the plans for self-employment-cum-income creation are concerned.² The experiment of this approach coupled with the target group approach of rural development does not bear any promising evidences to the fact that the rural poor could be substantially benefited from the development programmes based on this approach in the present agrarian

situation. But the question is : why do the protective target group and household approaches to rural development become self-defeating in their effects in rural areas? An answer to this question needs an inquiry into the institutional arrangements of inter-relationships which exist between agrarian social structure and rural power in rural areas. But such an inquiry may not throw much light if the dynamics of rural development are not simultaneously taken into account. And so, the imperativeness of policy implications demands that the existing inter-relationships between agrarian social structure and rural power structure should be examined in the context of the dynamics of development that operate in rural areas.

The efficacy of the target group and family based approaches to rural development for delivering benefits to the poor has been examined here in the context of agrarian social structure and dynamics of development in the case of Karnataka, using some secondary and primary data. The secondary data are used for explaining the relationship between agrarian social and rural power structures at the macro level, and the primary data is used to demonstrate how their inter-relationships function in the dynamics of rural development at the micro level.

I. A General View

The agrarian social structure of changing rural India presents an inextricably intermeshed character of land and

caste relations in agriculture.³ Given a stage of development and a structure of property relations, the intermeshed character of such relations embodies certain elements of intimate social relations among the dominant castes, rich or capitalist peasants and rural elites in the process of production and distribution in rural areas. As a result, the prevailing rural power structure corresponds to or arises from such social relations in these areas.

The rural power structure presents a dualistic picture wherein there broadly co-exist two main classes - rural oligarchy on the one hand and dependent rural poor, on the other. The rural poor are, by and large, dependent on the rural oligarchy in various ways.⁴ As a result, the polity of rural India is, by and large, controlled or influenced by the rural oligarchs and they influence the process of policy formulation by making some adjustments with the rural poor on the basis of castes, creeds and religions. Such adjustments are reflected in terms of the protective policy measures and programmes launched by the Government. But even the spirit of such measures becomes a captive of the rural oligarchs who play an influential role in the process of implementing these measures at the grass-root level. In other words, the rural oligarchs having their commanding position in the institutional structure of rural power try to serve their interests more than those of the rural poor from the development programmes and measures, even though, they are specially meant for the poor.

II. Agrarian Social Structure

A more general and understandable form of defining or explaining the concept of agrarian social structure in the so-called caste-ridden rural society is to decompose the structure of caste relations in land or agriculture. At the aggregative level, it is difficult to present a decomposed picture of such relations but easy to present it in terms of simple land relations. The 26th round of the NSS (1971-72) data show that in Karnataka about 14 per cent of the total number of rural households with 10 acres and above holdings operate about 62 per cent of the total operated area, and the landless households constitute 40 per cent of the total households. The farm households with below 2.50 and 5 acres holdings constitute about 29 per cent of the total number of households and operate about 16 per cent of the total operated area. In this way, land relations picture can be obtained relating to all States and the country. The picture of caste relations in land cannot be shown at the macro level. But it may be presented on the basis of either primary investigations or general impressions that most of us have about it. For instance, the dominant castes like Bhumihaar in Bihar, Jat and Tyagi in Western U.P. and Rajput and Brahmin in Eastern U.P., Maratha in Maharashtra, Reddy and Kamma in Andhra Pradesh, Lingayat and Vokkaliga in Karnataka, etc. are the main holders of land. But how much of land they operate in their respective States or regions, is the question of statistical verifications and enquiry.

Karnataka is the State wherein some picture about caste relations in land of some statistical validity may be found in the Havanur's Backward Commission Report. In this State, Lingayat and Vokkaliga are the major dominant castes who constitute about 25 per cent of its total population. The Brahmins are not a numerically strong caste. But in terms of land possession and income, they are quite superior to the Kurubas or any other backward castes and communities. According to the Havanur Commission Report, the two dominant castes - Lingayat and Vokkaliga - own 32 per cent of the total area,⁵ while the Brahmins do more than 6 per cent of the area. According to some of the micro studies⁶ done at the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, a majority of large and medium farms households come from these dominant castes. Most of the large and medium farms operating households of these castes are rich peasants or capitalist farmers.

The inter-caste income relations, as found in the Havanur Commission's Report, points out that these two castes taken together share half of the total rural income and the rest is shared among other castes and communities. The inter-caste distribution of land and income presents a rough picture about the agrarian social structure of Karnataka wherein the Lingayat and Vokkaliga are dominant not only in terms of numerical strength but also in terms of income-generating assets. If the findings of micro studies are taken into account, they corroborate the hypothesis that the rich peasants mostly come from these dominant castes. As a result, the

poor sections of the rural people depend on them for subsistence. If the dependence of agricultural wage income is any indication to show such dependency, Table 1 reflects that the Lingayats, Vokkaligas and Brahmins have least dependence on agricultural wage income; but Kurubas, SC and ST depend more on the same. The Brahmins being more urban than rural elites have greater dependence on salaries and self-employed professional incomes. The table indirectly shows that the rural poor like SC and ST depend on the rural oligarchs for subsistence income.

Table 1

Composition of Total Income : Caste-wise in Rural Karnataka

(in per cent)

Sl. No.	Source	Lingayat	Vokkaliga	Brahmins	Kuruba	SC	ST
1.	Agriculture	56	74	49	57	48	51
2.	Agriculture Labour	4	6	3	20	23	20
3.	Others*	40	20	48	23	30	29
4.	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source : Computed from Havanur 'Karnataka Backward Commission Report', Vol. IV, 1975.

* This also includes non-agricultural labour income which is also wage income and thus it shows dependence on wage. The SC, ST and Kuruba mostly get from this type of income. But for other castes, it mostly includes incomes from salaries, business, etc.

III. Rural Power Structure

With this agrarian social structure, there exists a corresponding power structure. The socio-political character

of the polity of the State reflects the dominance of these two dominant castes in different democratic institutions and bodies - whether they are village Panchayats or Cooperative Societies or Block Development Boards or Land Development Banks or Municipalities or Town Panchayats.⁷ Table 2 shows how the dominant castes matter most in all such institutions or bodies of the State. The same table also indicates as to how the Brahmins are next to them in ladder. The Havanur Commission Report has not thrown light on the land-cum-asset-owning positions of the persons of these different castes. Hence it may be difficult to say that most of the members, leaders, secretaries and presidents of the different democratic bodies or institutions belonging to the dominant castes (and also to the Brahmins) come from the rich or capitalist peasantry who operate medium and large holdings. But it is not difficult to surmise that those who occupy a key position in rural power structure, are generally rich peasants. The surmise can be well validated on the basis of facts from various field studies and observations.

As has been observed by V.K.R.V. Rao in his study, 'the power structure is heavily weighted against the poorer and weaker sections of the village community'.⁸ His study points out that in Tumkur District, "of the 172 Chairmen, 76 are Vokkaligas, 56 Lingayats and 14 are pastorals. Only 9 belong to SC/ST classes, even though their representation on the Panchayat Committee is much higher".⁹ The same study also

Table 2

Composition of Power Structure in Rural Karnataka

(in percentage)

Sl. No.	Descriptions	Lingayats	Vokkaligas	Brahmins	Kuruba	SC	ST	Total
1.	Members in village panchayats	26.00	19.63	7.72	5.49	13.41	-	(100)
2.	Directors in Cooperative Societies	38.26	2.34	6.13	4.20	4.12	-	(100)
3.	Members in Cooperative Societies	23.86	26.29	2.80	4.00	14.04	-	(100)
4.	Money-lenders in village	52.08	12.50	4.17	-	-	-	(100)
5.	Leadership in the villages	38.03	18.11	9.46	2.21	6.04	-	(100)
6.	Elected Members of Taluk Development Boards	35.43	23.02	7.44	2.75	13.37	0.27	(100)
7.	Presidents of Taluk Development Boards	47.20	27.95	8.07	0.62	-	-	(100)
8.	Elected Members of Taluk Marketing Coop. Societies	43.20	24.84	9.68	1.92	1.10	-	(100)
9.	Elected Members of Land Development Boards	48.04	27.90	9.54	2.20	1.55	-	(100)
10.	Presidents of Land Development Boards	46.00	30.00	10.67	2.00	-	-	(100)
11.	Elected Members of Municipalities/Town Panchayats	21.57	6.55	10.87	5.73	8.73	-	(100)

Source : Same as Table 1.

shows that 'of the 172 Chairmen, the marginal and small land holders have only 29 Chairmen from their number, while 61 of them come from those who operate holding size of 5 to 12.40 acres and the rest, viz. 82 of them come from those who operate holdings varying from 12.50 acres to 50 acres and above'.¹⁰

The secretaries or presidents of Dairy Cooperative Unions and Village Milk Producers' Cooperative Societies which function under the KDCC Scheme, mostly come from the dominant castes/or rich peasants of the State. A field study¹¹ conducted in the ten villages of Bellary district similarly bears out this fact. In the field observation of the same study it was noted that all the Chairmen of the village Panchayats and Chairman of the Siruguppa Taluk Development Board belonged to the dominant castes operating land holdings varying from 40 acres to 131 acres of land.

All the above illustrations present an in-built relation of correspondence between the existing agrarian social structure and rural power structure which conditions the socio-politico-economic process of development in rural areas. Such institutional characteristics are not only specific to Karnataka but probably to the whole of rural India, having the same character of the State, property structure and development policy.

IV. Dynamics of Development : A Case Study

Given such agrarian structure and rural power composition, how their inter-relations matter in the dynamics of

development operating from the introduction of development programmes and measures in rural areas is presented here on the basis of field survey conducted for examining the impact of dairy development in rural areas of Karnataka.¹² All the member households (registered as well as non-registered) of the Viswanathapura Village Milk Producers' Cooperative Society were investigated, which were 304 in total coming from Viswanathapura, Solur, Devagunahalli, Shyanapanahalli and Bydrahalli. In this way, these villages form a cluster whose central place or growth centre is Viswanathapura village, being the centre of dairy development programme launched under the KDDC Scheme of dairy development.

The occupational characteristics of the rural households (i.e. 304 investigated so far) point out that 97 per cent of them were farmers and the rest reported other than farming as their main occupation. A majority of the farm households in the villages had a cluster of activities centred on farming; dairying being one among them. The landless households primarily depended on agricultural labour, though some of them have gone for dairying as a supplementary activity to their main occupation, viz. agricultural labour.

In this cluster, there is a pyramidal structure of land-caste relations. About 72 per cent of the total operated and owned area is concentrated among the Vokkaligas who are the dominant caste and constitute 53 per cent of the total households in the villages; and the rest is distributed among

Table 3

Caste-wise Distribution of Operated Area

(In per cent)

Sl No.	Castes	Households	Operated area
1.	Vokkaliga	53	71.96
2.	Kuruba	15	11.03
3.	Brahmin	2	3.36
4.	Scheduled Tribe	14	7.71
5.	Scheduled Caste	15	5.67
6.	Setty	0.7	0.27
7.	Achar	0.3	
8.	All	100	100.00

other castes like Kuruba, SC, ST, Brahmins, Achar, etc.

The scheduled caste and tribe respectively operate about 6 per cent and 8 per cent of the total operated area in the villages. An aggregative picture shows that the Vokkaligas are dominant not only in terms of numerical strength but also in terms of land possession.

The distribution of land holdings according to castes shows that some 82 per cent of the total number of large farm households belonged to the dominant caste alone. Similarly, 68 per cent and 73 per cent of the total number of households operating small and medium holdings respectively are of the Vokkaligas. Only 24 per cent of the total number of households falling in the marginal category of holdings

belongs to that caste. The scheduled caste households are primarily landless labourers and marginal farmers. Some 91 per cent of them are landless and poor peasants.

Table 4

Caste-wise Distribution of Households According to Different Farm Sized Groups

(in per cent)

Sl. No.	Castes/Farm sized groups	Land-less	Margi-nal	Small	Medium	Large
1.	Vokkaliga	-	24	68	73	82
2.	Kuruba	-	22	11	14	3
3.	Brahmin	-	1	3	2	5
4.	ST	30	24	11	5	5
5.	SC	70	27	6	6	-
6.	Setty	-	1	1	-	-
7.	Achar	-	1	-	-	-
8.	All	100	100	100	100	100

The four households out of 45 operate small and medium holdings only. No one operates land 10 acres and above. Some 73 per cent of the total number of Kurubas are marginal and small land holders and the rest are partly medium and partly large land holders. Similarly, 88 per cent of the ST households belong to the landless, marginal and small farm sized groups. The Brahmins numbered 3 out of 7 operate medium and large holdings.

The Vokkaligas are dominant not only in terms of numerical strength but also in terms of being large land holders. Most of the large farmers (numbered 38 which consti-

tute 12 per cent of the total number of rural households and operate half of the total area) come from the dominant caste and they alone operate 48 per cent of the total area. Such land-caste relations present a pyramidal structure in which both land relations pyramid and caste pyramid are inextricably intermeshed.

The dynamics of caste and class relations point out the existence of class-based village society but within the framework of its caste-based structure.¹³ The process of growth and change presents how capitalist relations are growing from horizontal development in villages. The stratification of the rural households in terms of class differentiation shows that 20 per cent and 27 per cent of them are capitalist and semi-capitalist respectively and the rest belong to the categories of peasants and poor peasants-cum-labouring class.¹⁴

The classification of the households according to castes in classes at the inter-farm level shows that (a) the capitalist and semi-capitalist farmers mostly come from the dominant caste in general and from those of the dominant caste in particular who operate medium and large holdings; and (b) the poor peasants-cum-agricultural labourers mostly come from those who are landless and marginal farmers, the scheduled castes being predominantly landless labourers and marginal farmers mostly belong to the last class-group. Table 5 further corroborates the proposition that there is

Table 5

Castes in Classes : According to Different
Operational Holding Sized Groups

(in numbers)

Sl No.	Holding sized groups	Castes in Capitalist Class				
		Vokka- liga	Kuruba	Brahmin	ST	Total
1.	Landless	-	-	-	-	-
2.	Marginal	1	1	-	-	2
3.	Small	8	2	2	-	12
4.	Medium	20	2	-	-	22
5.	Large	26	2	1	1	30
6.	All	55	7	3	1	66

Castes in Semi-capitalist						
	Vokka- liga	Kuruba	Brahmin	SC	ST	Total
1.	Landless	-	-	-	-	-
2.	Marginal	6	4	-	6	17
3.	Small	17	5	-	1	27
4.	Medium	18	6	1	3	30
5.	Large	5	1	1	-	8
6.	All	46	16	2	10	82

Castes in Peasant Class						
	Vokka- liga	Kuruba	Brahmin	SC	ST	Total
1. Landless	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Marginal	6	7	-	8	2	23
3. Small	20	2	1	1	2	26
4. Medium	7	2	-	-	-	9
5. Large	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. All	33	11	1	9	4	58

Castes in Poor Peasant-cum-working class								
	Vokka- liga	Kuruba	Brahmin	SC	ST	Achar	Setty	Total
1.	Landless	-	-	-	7	3	-	10
2.	Marginal	12	13	1	22	17	1	67
3.	Small	12	-	-	2	4	-	19
4.	Medium	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
5.	Large	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	All	25	14	1	31	24	1	98

an emergence of capitalist farmers from those who operate large holdings; and such farmers predominantly come from the dominant caste. This implies that the emerging capitalist relations are converging more significantly with the dominant caste (and upper caste like Brahmin) than with other castes in villages.

The dynamic setting of social relations or forces in income distribution highlights the following : (a) who are the beneficiaries from rural development? (b) why does the process of income distribution flow in favour of the emerging capitalist class or rich dominant caste? The analysis of caste-class relations in income distribution shows that the relative shares of income distribution flow among the households according to the relative position they hold in the structure of caste-land relations in production.

Table 6 points out that the capitalist farmers alone, who constitute 20 per cent of the total number of households share 48 of the total incomes from all sources in the villages. The semi-capitalist farmers who constitute 27 per cent of the total number of households, receive 31 per cent of the total income. The distribution of incomes according to different class-groups shows that the annual income per household is much higher in the capitalist group than what is found in other class-groups. The inter-caste distribution of income within and across different class-groups shows that the dominant caste and Brahmin have higher level of income per household.

Table 6
Class-wise Income Distribution

Sl. Class No. groups	Pc of house- holds	PC of total inco- mes	Income per household (Annual in Rs.)						ST
			Gene- ral	Vokka- liga	Bra- hmin	Kuru- ba	SC		
1. Capitalist	20	48	26130	29087	14072	13120	-		14698
2. Semi- capitalist	27	31	14062	15422	10158	14288	7964		10152
3. Peasants	19	11	6479	7313	7454	5609	5863		5873
4. Poor Peasants- cum-working class	34	10	4837	5526	11160	4450	4390		4618
5. All	100	100	12258	16839	15568	9230	3739		6033

The above analysis shows as to how the capitalists and the dominant caste in particular are substantially benefited from the development process that operates in the villages. But this may not be enough to say that even the target group approach to development also benefits the rural rich more than those who are poor peasants and landless labourers. Table 7, however, bears an evidence to this fact, so far as the distribution of gains from the spurt of dairy development programme in rural areas is concerned. The spurt of dairy development seems to have benefited the rural rich more than the poor, despite its basic objective being 'strengthening the economy of the weaker sections of the rural population'. The capitalist and semi-capitalist classes share 68 per cent of the total income from dairy in the villages; while the

peasants and the peasants-cum-labouring class constituting 53 per cent of the total number of households, derive only 32 per cent of the total dairy income. The landless poor get as meagre share as 1 per cent of the total dairy income in the villages.

Table 7

Inter-Class Income Distribution from Different Sources (in per cent)

Sl. No.	Class	% of total no. of households	Income from Different Sources				
			Agri-cul-ture	Dairy	Seri-cul-ture	Agri-cul-tural wages	Non-agri-cultural wages
1.	Capitalist	20	54	40	53	-	38
2.	Semi-capitalist	27	28	28	38	31	16
3.	Peasants	19	9	13	8	18	17
4.	Peasants-cum-Labouring class	34	9	19	1	51	29
5.	All	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note : Non-agricultural wages also include incomes of the salaried members.

The caste-wise distribution of dairy income, as shown elsewhere,¹⁵ indicates that the dominant caste alone command 69 per cent share in the total income from dairy, while scheduled caste and tribe respectively derive only 6 per cent and about 11 per cent of the total income in the villages. The rich or capitalist dominant caste take more than half of the total dairy income. A total picture about source-wise

income distribution across different classes (as shown in Table 7) points out that the rural rich command a major part of the gains from the development of activities in rural areas-whether it is agriculture or sericulture or dairying or non-agricultural employment of a regular character.

The relative picture of caste-class relations in income distribution (and so in production), thus, reflects how the dominant caste in particular strengthens the socio-economic position in the development process with an emergence of capitalism by gravitating the gains from that process. It also shows how the poor peasants and agricultural labourers in general and the scheduled caste in particular are left far behind the dominant caste and rich or capitalist peasants in the race of rural development in the clustered villages.

V. Conclusion

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The analysis of inter-relationships between agrarian social structure and rural power composition shows that the institutional structure of rural power is weighted against the rural poor in Karnataka. This is obviously on account of the strength of the rural rich that they command in the oligarchic structure of social relations that exist in production and distribution. The case study of the dynamics of development in the villages also bears a witness to this fact. The dominant caste with the possession of a large chunk of productive assets commands strength in rural areas

and with the introduction of development programmes like dairy development, the dynamics of the development process by and large operate in favour of those of the dominant caste in particular who possess large and medium holdings. The protective target group or household approach to planning for rural development does not seem to serve its purpose from dairy development because of the dominant position which the rural oligarchs like dominant rich peasants hold in the agrarian social structure and rural power structure existing in the rural areas of the State. Their position gets more strengthened if, given such conditions, the process of development leads to the growth of agrarian capitalism within the framework of caste-based social structure. Given this framework of social structure, the emerging characteristics of class relations in production and distribution are marred with the deliberately maintained caste stratifications as the institutions which divide the rural poor into castes and sub-castes. This is also a part of the game built into the protective target group and household approaches to planning for rural development which superficially aim at improving the socio-economic conditions of the rural poor without looking into the present conditions of agrarian social structure and rural power composition existing in rural areas.

(The author is thankful to Dr.T.S. Papola for his valuable comments on this paper. However, the author alone is responsible for any errors existing therein).

Notes and References

1. The World Bank's Blue-print, 'The Assault on World Poverty', states : "The central concept of rural development is of a process through which rural poverty is alleviated by sustained increases in the productivity and incomes of low-income rural workers and households. The emphasis is on raising output and incomes rather than simply redistributing current income and existing assets Operationally, this concept of rural development requires that the target groups be specified among the rural poor, for whom specific measures to raise production and income can be designed, and in whose case the resulting flow of benefits - direct and indirect - is both identifiable and potentially measurable. The notion of target groups lies at the root of the definition of rural development as a separable and distinct component of general development strategy", p. 17.

The World Bank being a major source of financing development programmes in the Third World countries like India plays an important role in designing the policy-frame of planning for rural development in such countries. The Indian Plan documents, therefore, also contain special references to this approach of rural development.

2. In fact, there is no basic difference between the target group approach and household theory of rural development. The latter also aims at improving the socio-economic conditions of those of rural poor who depend on traditional activities such as, toy-making, carpentry, weaving, blacksmithy, etc. The objective of this approach is to provide suitable opportunities to them for the development of their household activities in order to create self-employment and income for their better living. Again, this approach is also at the instance of the World Bank's Blue-print of rural development.
3. Please see M.N. Srinivas, 'Reflection on Rural Development', Mainstream, May 12, 1979 and 'India : Social Structure' (Chapter - II), Hindustan Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1980.
4. Alavi has argued that the conditions for the social and political dependence of the poor peasantry are firstly that the landlords or rich peasants should have the power to enforce the property relations that invest in them the right to appropriate surplus, in the last analysis they have to command the State, or at least to command

the support of the State, and to able to control means of repression. Secondly, the poor peasants should not have alternative means for securing livelihoods for if they have no other choice they have to submit to the demands of the landlords or rich peasants for the cultivation of their land. (H. Alavi, 'Rural Bases of Political Power', UL Peasant Seminar, mimeo, 1973 but requoted from John Harriss 'Why Poor People Stay Poor in Rural South India', Social Scientist, August 1979). John Harriss has also given a good empirical and analytical account of the reproduction of dependency in the same paper in the context of North Arcot agrarian structure in Tamil Nadu.

5. The land-owning position of the dominant castes who constitute 25 per cent of the total population does not seem to be serious; so far as the concentration of land is concerned. But considering the dominance of these castes in the structure of State's political power and the multi-dimensional role of land in development process and socio-politico-economic power, the given land-owning position of the dominant castes should not be undermined or overlooked. Dilip S. Swami, in his paper 'Land and Credit Reforms in India', Social Scientist, June and July 1980, has vividly demonstrated as to how land is a power to derive gains from development and credit flow in particular. His analysis is a pointer to this fact that the land-owning position of the dominant castes should not be underestimated.
6. G.P. Mishra and M. Vivekananda, 'Impact of Canal Irrigation in Bellary District of Karnataka', mimeo 1977; D.V. Raghav Rao, 'Punchayats and Rural Development', Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi, 1980 and G.P. Mishra, 'Impact of Dairy Development in Rural Areas of Karnataka', mimeo 1979; and V.M. Rao, M.V. Nandkarni, N.D. Kamble, A. Aziz, G.P. Misra, et al, 'Impact of Irrigation : Canal, Tank and Well', Himalaya Publishing House, Bombay 1980.
7. James Manor (in his paper : 'Pragmatic Progressives in Regional Politics: The Case of Devaraj Urs', Economic and Political Weekly, Annual No. 1980 has observed that the two dominant castes enjoyed the pre-eminence in State politics by their representatives prior to the coming of Devaraj Urs into State power as the Chief Minister. This is partly true but not wholly. Even during the Urs regime, these castes enjoyed their dominance in the pyramidal structure of the State's political power, because the structure was inextricably based on the support of these dominant castes at the grass-root level. That is why the Urs Congress was routed in the last Lok Sabha General Election, despite the formulation and implementation of a number of progressive measures by Devaraj Urs. Even today, they enjoy a dominant place and role in the States' power structure.

8. V.K.R.V. Rao, 'Issues and Problems of Development of Tumkur', UNAPDI and ISEC Workshop on Population Planning and Area Development, November 20 - December 15, 1978.
9. Ibid, p. 52.
10. Ibid, p. 52.
11. This is referred to the Impact of Canal Irrigation : Case Study of Bellary District in 1974-75 which was conducted under the supervision of the author.
12. This is based on the data collected for the study of 'Impact of Dairy Development in Rural Areas of Karnataka', in the year 1976-77.
13. Please see, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, 'Castes, Classes and Parties in Modern Political Development', Social Scientist, November 1979, and Rajat Subhra Mukhopadhyay, 'Role of Caste in Agrarian Relations', Social Scientist, April 1980.
14. There are three criteria used to classify rural households in terms of four classes : capitalist, semi-capitalist, peasants and peasants-cum-labouring class - (a) investment in well irrigation, energised pumpsets and tractors; (b) commercialisation of agricultural products in terms of marketed surplus of good grains, sale of commercial crops and sericulture; and (c) use of wage labour in relation to family labour. The households which satisfy all the above characteristics are grouped as capitalist. The households in this group do not hire out their family labour in other farms, but on the contrary, they hire in wage labour. The households which have possessed the first two of the above characteristics (i.e. criteria) are classified as semi-capitalist. The case of hiring-in and hiring-out labour is not very much clear in this group. Some of these households hire-out family labour but there are also a few which hire-in agricultural labour. That is why the households with the possession of the first two characteristics but having a mixed position of hiring out and hiring in labour are arbitrarily grouped as semi-capitalist. The households having any one of the first two characteristics are classified as peasants. They use family labour-based technique of farm production. But many of them belonging to the scheduled caste and tribe and Kuruba caste also hire-out their family labour. The last class/group includes landless labourers together with peasants. The peasants in this group use family labour-based technique of farm production; but all of

them also hire-out their family labour for wage earnings in other farms. Hence they depend on agricultural wage income as well as on subsistence output. They do not possess any one of the above characteristics. That is why they are grouped with landless labour households and called as peasants-cum-labouring class.

- 15 Please see, G.P. Mishra, 'Distributional Effects of Rural Development Strategies : A Case Study, Economic and Political Weekly, September 26 (review of agriculture), 1979.

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